

It's the
People!

Profiles of Community Media Makers

The Journal of the
Alliance for Community Media

Volume 18 No. 2

Get in touch with your community with the Interactive Video Bulletin Board

THE CHANNEL THAT TAKES REQUESTS:

- Lets viewers choose what they see.
- Handles up to 999 topics of any length.
- Prints reports of what viewers choose.
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"I can watch it taking calls from my office, and know that we're serving the community. The feedback helps us understand our viewing audience's likes and dislikes."

-David Vogel, General Manager,
Community Television of Knoxville

"Since placing the system in service, we have seen a community response that now exceeds 18,000 inquiries per month. The Interactive Video Bulletin Board has become an integral part of our community service program"

- Ian N. Wheeler, Executive Director,
Fairfax Cable Access Corporation

"Since installing the Interactive Video Bulletin Board, we've gotten more interest and participation from non-profits than we had in the last 10 years. It's less work, more effective, and it's fun for viewers to use!"

- Lynn Carillo-Cruz, Former Executive Director,
Quote...Unquote, Albuquerque

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- Barbara Popovic, Executive Director,
Chicago Access Corporation

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Over 1,700 Entries in Hometown Video Festival!

Local cable programmers throughout the United States and Canada submitted a total of 1,751 entries in the **1995 Hometown Video Festival**, the annual competition sponsored by the **Alliance for Community Media**.

Entries came from 392 cities in 38 states and four Canadian provinces. Massachusetts led all states with 306 entries, followed by California with 264 and Michigan with 124. The number of entries from each Region of the Alliance is as follows:

Northeast.....	494
Far West.....	299
Central States	274
Midwest	204
Mid-Atlantic	163
Northwest	130
Southeast.....	105
Mountain	53
Southwest	29

This high number of entries from North American communities once again confirms a very broad interest in the production of video programming by community groups and individuals, educators, government agencies, and cable companies for presentation on local cable channels.

The Hometown Video Festival, now in its 18th year, is the oldest and largest video competition which honors the work of local cable programmers. The Festival includes 36 categories, including four "Overall Excellence" categories which honor outstanding public, educational, and government access facilities and local origination centers of cable systems.

Hometown is unique because the works of media professionals are generally judged separately from those produced by non-professionals. In addition to technical quality and execution, the videotapes entered are judged on how well they address

CONNECTIONS

community concerns. Judging is a two-step process which involves 32 access facilities and cable companies from the United States and Canada as preliminary judging sites. Each site selects four finalists from their assigned categories which are forwarded to the final judging location.

Final judging for the **1995 Hometown Video Festival** will take place in Sacramento, California from May 19 - 21, hosted by **Access Sacramento**. **Hometown** winners will be announced and awards presented on July 6, 1995, in Boston, Massachusetts at an Awards Ceremony to be held in historic **Faneuil Hall** during the **Alliance's International Conference and Trade Show**.

Cable World is a sustaining sponsor of the **1995 Hometown Video Festival**.

For more information, contact **Randy VanDalsen**, **Hometown Video Festival**, 3001 "J" Street, Suite 201, Sacramento, CA 95816, or phone (916) 441-6277.

PEG Access Directory Delivered to Members of Congress.

Every member of the U.S. **Senate** and **House of Representatives** now has the country's most complete listing of PEG access and local origination centers at their fingertips! The 270-plus page **Community Media Resource Directory** was published by the **Alliance for Community Media** with assistance of a grant from the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**. Thanks to the funding from the foundation and from the **Alliance Public Policy Council** and **Public Policy Network**, the 535 copies of the directory were distributed to the offices of all

members of Congress on March 21 and 22 — timed to be just days from the **Senate Commerce Committee** mark-up of the telecommunications reform bill.

*If you're not a Member of Congress, the **CMRD** is available for \$40 for Alliance members and \$60 for non-members from the Alliance National Office, (202) 393-2650.*

1993 Hometown Winner Dies in Surfing Accident.

Mark Foo, producer of **H3O**, a magazine-format surfing show which won a **Hometown Award** in the Sports category in 1993, died in a surfing accident at Half Moon Bay, California on December 23, 1994, according to **Associated Press** reports.

H3O, produced by Foo and **Mike Latronic**, grew from a local public access program into a national show when it was picked up by **Prime Ticket**, the cable sports network.

According to published reports, Foo travelled to Half Moon Bay to ride unusually high swells in the area. He crashed while riding a large wave and was pulled beneath the water after his surfboard apparently struck him in the head. His body was recovered about two hours later.

Chicagoans Fight to Save Access.

Despite an extensive survey completed in 1994 showing that 92% of Chicago's cable customers believe that **Chicago Access Network (CAN) TV** is valuable to the community, cable provider **Prime Cable** petitioned the **Chicago Cable Commission** on August 24, 1994 to turn **Channel 42** — a CAN-TV access channel — over to

commercial broadcast programming for one year. Contractually, the **Chicago Cable Commission** has the authority to grant use of the channel if it is deemed "underutilized."

Over the next few weeks, **Prime Cable** extended its request to include **FYI Chicago TV27**, Chicago's oldest public access channel. Dozens of community groups rallied to save the channels, but despite their testimony, the **Chicago Cable Commission** voted 3-1 to allow **Prime Cable** to take over **Channel 27**.

In an emergency meeting, the **Chicago Access Corporation (CAC)** Board of Directors passed a resolution on October 3 that CAC would seek judicial review of the **Cable Commission** decision. A lawsuit was filed by CAC on October 7.

Chicago citizens again rallied on behalf of CAC by writing letters and postcards, and calling their representatives on the phone. The **Chicago Sun-Times** ran two editorials in support of CAC, and several groups came together to produce access television programming to address the issue.

The public outcry soon became political pressure as a number of Chicago aldermen sided with CAC. As the "underutilization" claim became increasingly difficult to justify, **Prime Cable** withdrew their request to take over the channel. The **Chicago Cable Commission** then cancelled their approval for the takeover, and CAC withdrew their lawsuit.

Because of overwhelming community support, **Channels 19, 21, 27, 36 and 42** are still safely under the CAC umbrella as access channels for the public.

How to make your access center successful!

The 200-page masters thesis

See **Connections**, page 30...

Public Policy Report

Alliance Working Overtime in 1995

by Alan Bushong

With telecommunications legislation in 1995 seeming certain, the **Alliance for Community Media** has blended the nationwide work of members with an energetic staff at the national office to provide community input to lawmakers as a balance to the avalanche of information from the telephone and cable companies. Building on 1994 momentum, the Alliance is working for nothing less than a legal structure for the 21st century that provides meaningful, relevant two-way access to electronic media for the millions of Americans who use and fund telecommunications — not just the few that own the systems.

The message of the Alliance has been simple:

1. Private, for-profit telephone and cable companies use public rights of way and airwaves to conduct business, and owe communities compensation in return.
2. The PEG access model on cable TV works, as demonstrated by the past 20 years! Access centers are a low cost, efficient point of access to telecommunications networks and an ideal place to provide ongoing community training and support. Community volunteerism drives the channels, keeping production costs low. No tax dollars are used, and related costs to government are minimal.
3. Regulatory parity is fair and makes sense. Comparable treatment of telephone and cable companies is a fair, affordable and effective way to maintain and expand this unique and valuable form of access to telecommunications systems.

How effective is the Alliance's message?

An increasing number of senators and representatives of both parties know the Alliance's message, recognize the value of community media and understand the low cost to provide the service. Three key factors have built this improved environment:

1. Alliance members have effectively informed their constituents using community media about pending legislation, and constituents have made their voices heard. Last summer,

Alliance members and constituents provided 80% of the public support for **Senator Inouye's** public space bill. With over one million volunteers using the channels, and many millions more watching unique community-based programming, Congress takes notice. The effect of constituent contact was clear when the Alliance Board met in Washington in late February and took the opportunity to meet with legislators.

2. Legislators are increasingly using community channels in their efforts to speak to their constituents without an editorial filter. An increasing number of access/media centers are facilitating candidate forums and local town hall meetings with elected officials, and providing additional channel space for programs produced by senators and representatives in Washington, DC. The need for community channel space may intensify as political campaign reformers tackle the issue of runaway campaign spending and the resulting proliferation of non-informative, negative 30-second commercial TV spots.
3. An energetic, creative staff. Thanks to payments by many Alliance members and an especially effective **Northeast Regional Conference** campaign spearheaded by **Boston Executive Director Hubert Jessup**, **ACM Executive Director Barry Forbes** has hired **Government Relations Coordinator Jeffrey Hops**. While **Kelly Matthews** has provided members services, Barry and Jeff have energetically gathered data, worked with Board members to develop positions on legislative language, and then met with key senate and house committee members and staffs.

For the first time, all senate and house offices were aware of community media

before the meetings began, and knew community needs by the end of the meeting.

What can Alliance members expect?

The Alliance will be most successful when constituents, members and staff work continuously with elected officials. Key interactive steps in the legislative process

include:

1. Writing the bill in subcommittee. *The most important time in bill creation is the start.* Alliance constituents and members with senators and representatives in the Telecommunications subcommittees have the first, and best opportunity to work with legislators to include public space in draft legislation. Language included in the first draft has the best chance of becoming law.

2. Committee consider-

ation. Although the subcommittee often comprises a majority of the full committee, amendments can be made at this stage. Additional Alliance constituents and members can be involved during committee work.

3. Senate/House consideration. Although changes at this stage are least likely, Alliance constituents and members may need to work with legislators to either support, oppose or add provisions to bills.

The Alliance recognizes the work load of most members and the busy lives of constituents. Calls for action will be limited to the most critical stages, as we balance a sense of responsible action with the reality of what is possible for you at the local level.

Preparing for the next step.

Just when many of us became familiar with the ins and outs of cable franchises, we may face a shift to regulation at the **Public Utility/Service Commission**, and the Alliance wants to help. **Public Policy Committee** members are assembling

See Public Policy, page 28...

"Calls for action will be limited to the most critical stages, as we balance a sense of responsible action with the reality of what is possible for you at the local level."

Alliance Information Infrastructure

The Alliance Ramps Up!

by Kari Peterson

The Alliance Information Infrastructure (AII) Committee has had a busy few months. This newest of committees was formed last summer in order to analyze current communications options and make recommendations to the national office for ways in which we can improve our communication, both inside the organization and outside. Additionally, the AII committee has a third goal; to educate our organization — board members, staff and members — about emerging communications services and issues through articles, workshops and publications. Electronic communication is a huge frontier and, as always, the Alliance's goal is to make communication technology and information accessible to all.

While communication and information dissemination in the 90s takes many forms (conference calls, phone trees, fax trees, publications, and "snail mail"), the AII committee will focus its efforts this year on the development of *electronic* communication services. By moving into the electronic world, the Alliance can effectively and affordably reach many more people with valuable and timely information. The Alliance, like so many organizations, businesses and institutions, will research and then adopt a full array of electronic

services to not only improve its internal communication but to establish a global presence and vastly multiply the distribution of critical information.

What are the new electronic services soon to be available through the Alliance and how can you take advantage of them?

Currently, the AII committee is focusing its evaluation in two major areas: *electronic mailing lists* and *World Wide Web* pages. (See *Definitions*, this page.)

Mailing lists you can join now:

Alliance for Community Media discussions ("alliance-nw"): Send electronic mail to: *alliance-nw-request@isu.edu*. In the subject line, type: *subscribe*.

Telecommunications legislative & regulatory issues ("telecomreg"): Send electronic mail to:

listserver@relay.adp.wisc.edu. In body of message, type: *subscribe telecomreg yourfirstname yourlastname*.

Industry and philosophical telecommunications issues ("roundtable"): Send electronic mail to: *listproc@cni.org*. In body of message, type: *subscribe*

roundtable yourfirstname yourlastname.

If you have favorite (related) electronic mailing lists which may be of interest to others in the Alliance, please e-mail the
See Alliance Information, page 30...

Getting There...

by Dirk Koning

There are four basic types of connection to the **Internet**. The first is a standard dial up access with your computer, a modem, software and an **Internet Provider (IP)**. Many local IP's are popping up, so be careful to check out prices and connectivity before subscribing. The standard commercial services (**America Online**, **Compuserve**, etc.) are fine for e-mail, but you should plan to go with a full Internet Provider. The **Institute for Global Communication (IGC)** and the **Telecommunications Cooperative Network (TCN)** — both good non-profit organizations (NPOs) set up to help other NPOs — have combined to offer low cost 1-800 number Internet access. This may be your best first bet if you can't get on through a college or low-cost local co-op provider. (Call IGC's Sarah Hutchinson at 415-442-0220).

The second and third options for Internet access are called **SLIP (Serial Line Interface Protocol)** or **PPP (Point to Point Protocol)** accounts and these again are established through an IP. The Protocol referred to here has to do with the language and speed at

See Getting There, page 30...

Definitions...

by Paul LeValley

Nothing worse than not speaking the language. It seems more and more conversations are going on in a strange, new tongue. Maybe you, like me, are starting to feel left out. If so, read on!

As the member of the **AII Committee** most ignorant of all matters cyber, I was elected to provide a beginners glossary of terms. Below are just a few words and phrases that, if not already a part of the conversations going on around you, soon will be. **Fun Learning Suggestion:** Make up "flash cards" and practice with your friends!

Anarchie: Computer software that allows you to *download* information from other computers on the **Internet**.

BBS: Acronym for "bulletin board system." A way for people who have computers and *modems* to communicate with each other by posting messages in a common electronic location.

Baud: The unit of measurement for the transmission of electronic information via *modem*. The higher the number, the faster the transmission.

CD-ROM: Acronym for "compact disc-read only memory." Computer storage discs that look like audio CD's but can also store text, graphics and video. Like audio CD's they are non-linear, in that information anywhere on the disc can be easily accessed.

Cyber: I don't know either! No doubt adapted from "cybernetics," it has come to refer to the "unreal" world of electronics. Used as a sort of prefix, e.g.: *cyberspace, cybertime, cyberworld*.

Important tip: don't take any *cybermoney*.

Download: The act of transferring data from one computer to another using a *modem* and telephone line.

E-mail: Messages transmitted electronically from one computer to another.

Messages can be personal or posted to a
See Definitions, page 28...

The Uprising of '34

Let's Talk About What Hurts

by Judith Helfand and George C. Stoney

When we began what proved to be a six-year-long effort to make *The Uprising of '34*, a 90-minute film which will be seen on the PBS series *P.O.V.* June 27th, we knew we were dealing with matters of race, class and the right of working people to speak for themselves, all concerns that divide the American public today quite as much as they did in the years of the Great Depression. Our hope was that by presenting these painful points of conflict honestly as they took place in 1934 we might stimulate people to think about, and talk with their neighbors about, things which even in 1995 few of us find easy to confront publicly.

Since last October, in a series of screenings of rough cuts in churches, community halls, union meetings, museums and academic conferences, we have discovered that the film does, indeed, encourage the kind of open dialogue we had hoped it would. These screenings have also helped us make editorial changes that clarify the complex story of the film's central metaphor: the all but forgotten massive general textile strike, the largest in American history, that was put down with calculated brutality and guile by local militia, state governments and employers who defied an agreement announced by **President Roosevelt** himself.

After every screening, people have been eager to say how little has changed since the 1930s, how much we seem to be going back to those mean old days before such governmental devices as the **National Labor Relations Board**, legal requirements for color-blind employment and income-based aids for education mediated our social conflicts. Viewers old enough to have personal experience of the time are inspired by their

counterparts on the screen to share with younger people painful memories they have hardly dared talk about before, giving sharp local relevance to the film's conclusions.

Because the film centers its attention on what happened in the southeast, most of these test screenings have taken place there.

Stimulating stories — sometimes double page essays — in such major regional dailies as the *Columbia, South Carolina State* and *Charlotte, North Carolina Observer*. Screenings have also met opposition. In *Spartinburg, South Carolina*, where the declining textile industry has now been supplemented by an enterprising industrial development initiative promising “no unions,” *The Uprising of '34* was listed in the syllabus of a course announced for the community college. When the President of **Spartinburg Tech** learned of this he canceled the course and fired the teacher. Fortunately this and other such incidents have been widely reported, stimulating lively debate on talk radio, in letters to the editor and on op-ed pages.

Preliminary screenings elsewhere have demonstrated that this is not just a southern story. The **Vermont Labor Councils** are scheduling screenings and discussions in every community where they have members. **New Jersey Public Television** has broadcast an extended interview with the filmmakers, including a clip from the film. This was shown on NYC's **Channel 13** in advance of the film's New York City premiere March 21st. Community radio station **WBAI** has broadcast one program and is planning others before and after the national telecast.

Ideally the *P.O.V.* showing would be followed immediately by local discussions and call-ins. Unfortunately most PBS affiliates haven't this kind of flexibility in their scheduling. So we are wondering if this wouldn't be an opportunity to use local access in

somewhat the same way. **Manhattan Neighborhood Network** has already reserved an hour of studio time immediately after the June 27th broadcast for a live call-in featuring some of the film's makers, participants and academic advisors after they have watched the telecast in the studio.

We hope similar arrangements can be made with other access centers. Of

“Manhattan Neighborhood Network has already reserved an hour of studio time immediately after the June 27th broadcast for a live call-in featuring some of the film's makers, participants and academic advisors after they have watched the telecast in the studio.”

tremendous help in finding likely sponsor-producers will be the work of **Sally Alvarez** of Greensboro, North Carolina Public Access whose forthcoming Ph.D. thesis shows where and how organized labor is using access channels. We solicit inquiries from others and promise to respond with written material, contacts with likely and able on-camera participants and advance copies of the film from which short clips might be used. Call us as soon as you can at 1-800-428-4322 and talk with **Lori Castronouvro**. Be watching on June 27th!

Judith Helfand is co-director and producer of The Uprising of '34, and an alumni of NYU's film school, where she studied with George Stoney. George Stoney teaches film at NYU and is one of the founding members of NFLCP (the precursor to the Alliance).

Alliance Lobby Day

Bringing PEG Issues to Congress

On January 23, over thirty citizen lobbyists went to Washington, DC to stress the need for public, educational, and government access on all forms of electronic media. The members of

the **Alliance for Community Media** Board of Directors and eight other Alliance members met with the legislative assistants of over seventy members of U.S. **Senate and House of Representatives**. The highlight of the event was a personal fifteen-minute meeting with **House Telecommunications Subcommittee Chair Jack Fields (R-TX)**, which was arranged by **Access Houston Executive Director Beth Romney**.

"Members of Congress naturally pay more attention to their own constituents," said **Alliance Executive Director Barry Forbes**. "So this was a terrific way to force their attention to the issues that the National Office has been pushing for the past few months."

The day began with a briefing by the Alliance's government relations coordinator, **Jeffrey S. Hops**. The citizen lobbyists were brought up to speed with current issues and some of the complexities of previous legislation, regulation, litigation — and the impact on public, educational and governmental ("PEG") access reality. The citizen lobbyists then criss-crossed Capitol Hill, met with the legislative assistants of their Members of Congress, and left behind Alliance legislative packets and copies of the Alliance's **Community Media Resource Directory**.

Squeezed into one of the cloakrooms

off the House floor, the meeting with Chairman Fields included Romney, Forbes, Hops, and Alliance Board member and legal advisor **Jim Horwood**. Romney described the importance of PEG access to

the Houston area, thanked Fields for his previous support, and urged his support as Chairman. Fields emphasized that the close working relationship he had with former Chair **Ed Markey (D-MA)** would continue in the development of the upcoming Fields-Markey draft telecommunication.

"Alliance Board members and the other access managers were excellent lobbyists," remarked Forbes. "Jeff and I went

along to some key visits — and we were impressed with their grasp of the legislative issues and their passion for the cause. Now our job is to provide the legislative language, help coordinate more grassroots pressure — and hope the Members vote in support of PEG access!"

Victory for PEG Access in Senate Commerce Mark-up.

The Alliance for Community Media successfully worked toward the insertion of a PEG access provision in the Senate's proposed telecommunications legislation, calling it "an important victory for the public interest and for the constitutional rights of all Americans to have full access to the Information Superhighway."

Alliance Executive Director **Barry Forbes** said that the provision, introduced

as an amendment by **Sen. John Kerry (D-MA)** and approved by voice vote during the March 23rd mark-up in the **Senate Commerce Committee**, would ensure that PEG centers have low-cost access to so-called **video dialtone ("VDT")** channel capacity. The terms of PEG access would parallel some of the cost-related terms and conditions of access for broadcast television stations.

The victory was largely the result of the "inside" work of Alliance government relations coordinator **Jeff Hops** and Alliance Board member **Jim Horwood** in developing legislative language and the "outside" work of **Boston Neighborhood Network Executive Director Hubert Jessup** in coordinating intensive phone lobbying by Massachusetts and Maine access centers.

"It's critical that communities continue to have public access services, regardless of whether they're provided by the traditional cable companies or the new video services at the same low cost as local broadcast outlets, said Kerry in a press release dated March 23, 1995. "As we open up the video marketplace to competition, we can't forget that the public has a right to use these services as well. People fought long and hard during the 1970s and 1980s to require cable companies to offer public access. I'm glad those gains won't be rolled back because of new advances in technology."

Another provision supported by the Alliance, which would require VDT providers to pay a "competitive neutrality" fee in accordance with state law, was introduced by **Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX)**. This amendment also passed on voice vote. The Alliance believes that this provision would level the playing field between cable and VDT operators, and to ensure that states and localities receive fair compensation for use of their rights of way.

The Alliance will now focus its grassroots campaign on members of the House of Representatives, where telecommunications legislation still awaits introduction by House Commerce Tele-

See Alliance News, page 28...



Beth Romney of Access Houston with Congressman Jack Fields (R-TX), Chair of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee.

It's the People...!

by Deborah Vinsel

I have been privileged to work at three different access centers in three different states. The centers are very different and the communities they serve are each unique. But, there is a common thread that winds from one to the other....*the people!*

In every access center there are certain types of people. There's the "put a bed in the studio, they live here" type, the "I just want to run camera" type, and of course the "teen-age tech junkie who really does know more about computers than you do" type. The people of access are about as diverse a group as you find anywhere. They are senior citizens and grade school kids, conservative and liberal, Christian and atheist, male and female, retired and professional. They're multi-cultural, gay and straight, financially comfortable and those in need. After viewing the diverse group gathered at an **Alliance Northwest Regional Conference**, an access colleague of mine declared, "I have never seen any other situation where a group of people could have such fundamental differences of opinion on practically everything yet be in such total agreement on one common issue."

So, to celebrate the contribution that thousands of access producers make to their communities each week, we thought it would be appropriate to introduce you to some of the real people who use access. In these pages you will meet a disabled artist who found a new medium through which to express herself, a second grade teacher who used video to motivate his students and so many more. You'll read about the community producer who inspires an access manager, and get a closer look at a teenager who is making a difference in her community through her video work. They are all unique stories, unique people, but with a common bond.

Community producers have a need to speak out, to change their communities, or to change themselves. I have seen people evolve from passive receivers to active communicators. I have watched the ego of self-promotion fade into the conviction of community service. I have noticed how the quiet become the vocal. And, I have witnessed those intimidated by technology embrace it and use it to advance their cause. *It's the people* who make access what it is!

People are never the same after walking into an access center and communities are never the same after an access center opens. Access changes a community, one person at a time – because access changes "the people."

Deborah Vinsel, Executive Director of Thurston Community Television in Olympia, Washington, is Editor-in-Chief of this issue of CMR.

Sandy Spring, MD

Ann Aury

Program titles: *Art Strokes* and *Challenges*.

Ann is an energetic Media Assistant who is 70 years young. She has been an access producer for six years and has created 106 programs at **Montgomery Community Television**.

She first got involved with community access, she says "as a new beginning for an old lady!" She currently produces two series. *Art Strokes* is a 30-minute talk show featuring well-known artists and their works. *Challenges*, another talk show, features two young people on each program who are doing interesting and exceptional things in their young lives.

"Our programs have wide viewership," she says, noting that she often receives community feedback by phone and through the mail. Ann's favorite thing about access is "producing shows!" When asked about the impact on her community if access was not available, she wrote, "it would be the pits!"



Ann Aury (center) celebrates show #75 with her Art Strokes crew.



Elaine Birtch has produced 150 episodes of Art Beat over the course of four years.

Springfield, IL

Elaine Birtch

Program title: *Art Beat*.

Elaine is a 62-year-old teacher. She has been an access producer for four years and has created 150 episodes of her program *Art Beat* at **Sangamon State University-Access 4**. Elaine first got involved with community access to support "the strong commitments I have for the work the **Springfield Area Arts Council** does for this community.

Art Beat features interviews with local artists, often in their studios, talks with young people promoting arts events and interviews with "living treasures" – usually people who have made a unique contribution to the community. According to Elaine, "access has provided many groups and individuals with an opportunity to promote their special interests that would not otherwise have the chance." Elaine's favorite thing about access is "the way this type of television personalizes" a program with the focus on community people, events and programs.

Germantown, TN

Frank Bluestein

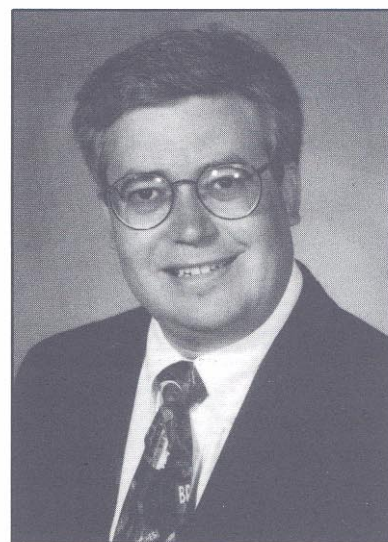
Program titles: *Shelby County Schools*; *Wake Up Germantown*; *I Did It Myself*; *Youth In Government*; *Germantown Festival Day Telethon*; *Access Together Project*; *Crosstalk*; and more!

Frank is the Executive Producer of **GHS-TV**. He has been involved in access for 12 years and, along with his students, has created an effective, award-winning educational access center at **Germantown High School**.

Frank first got involved with community access to "serve both the access television needs of the Germantown community and to also prepare my students for careers in television." Programs by **GHS-TV** range in topic and style from the daily news program produced by students to election coverage and interview shows.

"Community access provides one of the few mass media outlets through which people can express themselves," Frank says. "Loss of this resource would be highly detrimental to Germantown. Community access has served as the conduit through which the Germantown community can effectively voice its ideas and opinions."

Frank's favorite thing about access is "being able to help my students and my community create and excel in the video medium."



Frank Bluestein helps his high school students by teaching them how to produce television programs.

Springfield, VA

K. Pearson Brown

Program titles: *One in 10 People*; *Behind the Scenes*; *Movie Made Virginia*; *GFX*.

Pearson is a 31-year-old public relations professional. She has been an access producer for six years and has produced four series at **Fairfax Cable Access Corporation**.

She first became involved with community access because she wanted to learn about television production and to create a show with positive social value. Her program *One in 10 People* is a magazine show which spotlights personalities, lifestyles, arts and entertainment of interest to the gay community.

"Access gives a voice and an image to those who are often overlooked by mainstream media," she says. "My show *One in 10 People* brought together hundreds of volunteers and individuals of all types to work together and appreciate each other's diversity."

"Losing access would silence those voices and make those images unseen," she continues. Pearson's favorite thing about access is "the rush of adrenaline when tape is rolling and I'm calling the shots!"



Pearson Brown directs a taping of *One in 10 People*.

Palo Cedro, CA

Thomas Burkett



One of Thomas Burkett's second-grade students operates camera.

Program titles: *Stone Soup*; *The Golden Goose*; *The Good, the Bad, and the Goofy*; *C.A.T.C.H. M.E.* 1992, 1993, 1994.

Thomas is a 41-year-old second grade teacher. He has been an access producer for three years, working with his students to produce six programs through **Redding Community Access Television**.

He first got involved with community access as a way of improving and enhancing the education and personal development of his students. "I produce programs that put my second grade students in the spotlight," he says. "They learn all about making television. Then they help put the programs together. The kids are involved in all phases of the production and they love it!"

"Without access," he continues, "my students and children would miss out on a very contemporary, cutting-edge, realistic curriculum. They would not have all the projects we've made to cherish in later years. I could never have offered this kind of program to my students without community access!"

Kettering, OH

Jeffrey Caldneil

Program titles: *Kettering Police Department Annual Report*; *Miami Valley National Night Out*; *Can You Afford It?*; and various public service announcements.

Jeffrey is a 38-year-old police officer. He has been an access producer for five years and has created 15-20 programs at **Miami Valley Cable Council**. He became an access producer as a way to get valuable information to the public at a low cost.

"We produce our *Annual Report* on video and distribute it to other police departments across the country and to the residents of Kettering," he says. *Can You Afford It?* was an

educational video to teach high school drivers about the monetary costs of drinking and driving.

"We also produced several other safety related PSAs," he continues.

"Without access, we would not be able to get out as much information.

We have been able to show the community how their tax dollars are spent and how police services affect them."

Jeffrey enjoys the challenge of producing a valuable, interesting program that educates and entertains the community.

"We have been able to show the community how their tax dollars are spent..."

Buffalo, NY

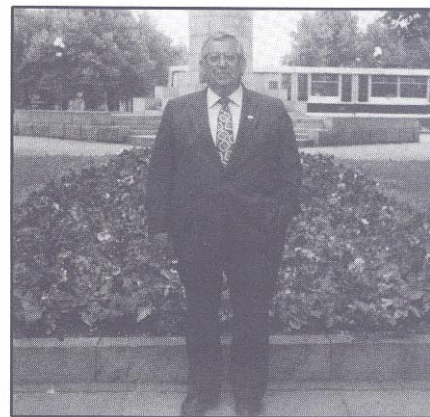
Ralph Cammarata

Program titles: *Buffalo Urban Renewal; State of the City Access; For Love of Country; Welcome to the S.P.C.A.; Children's Peace Festival.*

Ralph is a retired banker. He has produced over 100 programs at **Buffalo Community Access Media** in the past three and a half years.

"I thought it could help me in my job as a manager of neighborhood revitalization," he says of his initial interest in access. Ralph's production interest has been mostly government meetings and civic events.

"Access has given me and others the opportunity to publicize the achievements of people and groups," he says. "Without it, people in our community would no longer be able to freely express themselves."



Ralph Cammarata has produced over 100 programs in just three and a half years.

Shrewsbury, MA

Melanie Eresian

Program titles: *The Forum w/ Ara Eresian, Sr.; Worcester Art Museum Exhibits; Broad Meadow Brook - Audobon Sanctuary; United Way Honors Volunteers; God & Money - An Original Play.*

Melanie is a 33-year-old title examiner by day and an actress by night. She has been an access producer for six years and has created more than 30 programs at **Shrewsbury Public Access Connection (SPAC)**. She first got involved with community access to "fill a void created by my not being able to do what I wanted 24 hours a day."

She says that access has become "my creative outlet" and a community connection. "I treasure it!" she says enthusiastically.

Her programs cover a variety of subjects. *The Forum* is a bi-weekly political roundtable show with occasional specials with the press and Massachusetts politicians, including such names as **Ted Kennedy** and **John Kerry**. *The Art Museum* covers art exhibits and features



Access is "my creative outlet," says Melanie Eresian of SPAC.

discussions with the curator or artist.

Melanie has also done an "art break" show, updating the community about what's happening at local museums and theaters.

"I can't imagine Shrewsbury without SPAC!" she writes. "People are more politically aware [with access available], and they're more connected to the cultural and artistic events in their community." Melanie says her favorite thing about access is that "I can do or be anything at SPAC. Everyone there truly enjoys doing for others as well as themselves."

St. Louis, MO

Rosemary Feurer

Program title: *Labor Vision.*

Rosemary is a 35-year-old labor historian. She has been an access producer for a little more than three years, producing 86 episodes of her series *Labor Vision* at **Double Helix**.

She first got involved with community access "to challenge corporate media's neglect of the central issue of our time - the inordinate power of those who control the economy and run corporations over the many who do the work."

Her series has included programs on **NAFTA**, **GATT**, the economy, and working women's issues to

"Our best shows have dealt with a brutal lock-out by A.E. Staley..."

name a few. "Our best shows have dealt with a brutal lock-out by **A.E. Staley** manufacturing company that occurred when their employees refused to accept 12-hour days and unsafe working conditions," she reports.

"Without access," she writes, "we would go back to the status quo - no coverage of issues on corporate abuse, worker's real problems, lack of legal remedies for most workers, abuse of power, etc. There was very little attention given to workers' issues before our program." Rosemary listed freedom of expression as her favorite thing about access.

Tucson, AZ

K.T. Good

Program titles: *The Big Picture: Tucson's Murals; Emily, A Work in Progress; Gender Issues.*

K.T. is a 53-year-old artist. She has been an producer at **Access Tucson** for three years, and has produced 14 programs since first finding access. K.T. says she got involved with community access because "I wanted to document the murals and start doing art again after being 'fried' in graduate school studying film production."

The Big Picture was a series of field interviews with Tucson's muralists. *Emily* was a documentary about a new artist working out psychological issues through her artwork. *Gender Issues* is a series of experimental pieces exploring myths and realities concerning minority gender identification.

"My programs have given non-mainstream artists a voice," K.T. writes. "My mural series is in our local library. I hope it challenges the viewers in terms of their own values."

"The stories of my subjects are not told in mainstream media," she continues. "They have valuable lessons to share that can help break down barriers and bring understanding. Without access that would be lost." One of K.T.'s favorite things about access "is that it provides a place for many diverse voices – and each gets a chance to be heard."



K.T. turned to access after being "fried" in graduate school studying film production.

Stratford, CT

Sean Haffner

Program title: *The Lone Shark.*

Sean is a 27-year-old graphic artist. He has been an access producer at **WFAC Channel 34** for five years. He got involved with community access because he wanted to create the kind of programming that he enjoyed watching.

His program *The Lone Shark* is a live, fast paced, variety/talk show hosted by himself and his friend **Jim Sharkey**. The show covers a wide range of topics from local to national, serious to funny.

"We feature a wide variety of guests," he says, "from TV celebrities to music groups." Viewers are invited call-in and participate.

"Community access has given the public an outlet..."

"The uncensored views of local citizens would lose a medium through which they might reach thousands of viewers," he reports.

"Community access has given the public an outlet through which they can air their personal views on any subject, unedited and uncompromised."



Methuen, MA

Ingrid Harding

Program title: *Paws for Adoption.*

Ingrid works in public relations. She has been an access producer for over two years and has created 21 episodes of her series at **Methuen Community Television**. She began her program to better reach the community with important information about animal care and adoption. "Public access has brought our community closer together," she says. "We would lose an important form of communication if it weren't available." Ingrid's favorite thing about access is "working with other talented people in my community."

Ingrid Harding uses access television to help animals find homes.

Buffalo, NY

Roger Heymanowski

Program titles: *The Law & You; Meet the Candidates.*

Roger has been an access producer for seven years and uses the facilities at Buffalo Community Access Media.

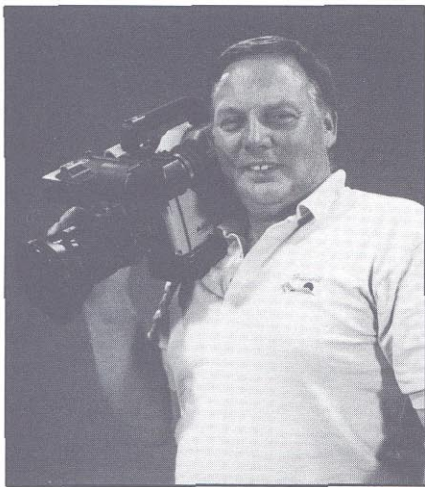
He has created over 100 programs and first got involved because he wanted to give people a better understanding of the

community they live in.

Roger has produced live programs about attention deficit disorder, block clubs, environmental allergies, cars and hot rods, as well as a variety of other topics.

"We would lose a true community viewpoint without access," says Roger. "I enjoy the public education and community awareness access provides."

"We would lose a true community viewpoint without access..."



"All my life I had a camera in my hands," explains 10-year access veteran John Landis.

Everett, WA

John Landis

Program titles: *Marysville - Planning for Your Future; Twilight - Light Landing; Fitness - The Fountain of Youth; Where do you go Little Child?; Off the Air but Still in our Hearts; Marysville Strawberry Parade.*

John is a 58-year-old electrician. He has been active at Viacom Cable public access for ten years and has created, in his words "hundreds of shows."

"All my life I had a camera in my hands," he says. "I started with 8mm film and moved to video because of the ease of editing. I found Viacom access and a new world opened up."

John produces music videos, city government programs, documentaries, parades and more. He says his favorite thing about access is "all of the great people involved! I'm looking forward to many more years in it."

Morristown, NJ

Ralph Litwin

Program title: *...Horses Sing None of It!*

Ralph is a 44-year-old musician and cabinet maker. He has been an access producer for six years and has created over 130 programs at Sammons Community Access TV.

"I've wanted to do television since I was a teenager," he says of his involvement with access. His series presents performers or groups in conversation with the host and in performance, with a jam session at the end. Most of his guests are local musicians from a variety of musical, cultural, and stylistic backgrounds.

"The entertainers' sources of inspiration and history of material performed are regular items of discussion," he says. "We also present storytellers, dancers, puppeteers, comics, and others. Guest artists often tell me that a lot of people saw the show, they got a bunch of calls, sold recordings, or got a gig. An instrument maker claimed he got 100 calls and visitors to his shop."

"It's lots of fun!" he says.



Ralph Litwin (kneeling) with his crew on the set of ...Horses Sing None of It!

Malden, MA

Challenges Don't Stop Sonny Kelly

by Linda Huckins

As usual, George Manfra, the technical director, buzzed me in. The place was hopping. From the control room I could hear, "Camera three, give me a two-shot...five minutes to roll-in." Both edit rooms were occupied and the phone was ringing for the live call-in downstairs in studio B. In the Computer Center, people were learning about the Internet. Just a typical Thursday night at Malden Access Television (MATV). In the midst of it all was one of MATV's veteran producers, Sonny Kelly, just making sure everything was running smoothly.

Sonny has cerebral palsy. His hands are twisted and he can't use his arms or his legs. He relies on his motorized wheelchair to get around. Sometimes it's difficult to understand him. But, even though Sonny may not be able to operate the equipment the way other producers can, he knows how each piece works. It's a common sight to walk into the station and see Sonny instructing a new producer or intern on how to operate a particular piece of equipment. There isn't a job at MATV that Sonny can't talk someone through. What Sonny lacks in physical dexterity, he makes up for in brain power.

How did Sonny become involved with MATV? "I was watching access television one day (on Wakefield Public Access)," Sonny said. "The program featured Rika Welsh discussing the new access station being built in Malden. I've always been interested in electronics, so I decided to go by and checked it out. I met Rika and John Luvender, the technical director at the time. We hit it off and I've been here ever since." That was a little over six years ago. Sonny has produced numerous programs at MATV, including Malden High School's graduation each year and "Inside Malden", a long-running public affairs program. He is also working on an instructional/informational program on handicapped accessibility on the MBTA and serves as a technical assistant on "Story Box," a bi-monthly children's program.

Sonny isn't only a producer at MATV. He is serving his second term as member representative on the Malden Access Television Board of Directors. "I'm elected by the membership to represent them to the Board and to present any

problems they may have," he explains. Sonny is also serves on the Educational Channel Access Committee and is a member of the Boston Center for Independent Living.

One of the biggest benefits from working with Sonny is an appreciation for people who are physically challenged. Sonny has helped us to look beyond the surface and see the man. "Yes, I'm disabled and need assistance," Sonny adds. "But, I can adapt to your needs. We can help each other." He says that MATV has given him a comfortable atmosphere where he can pursue interests without pressure. "It has helped me to work with people and have people work with me. They get to see me for who I am", he explains. "I enjoy it and have gained a lot. Hopefully, MATV has gained a lot, too."

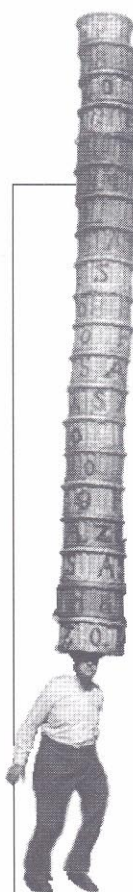
To other disabled people, Sonny advises, "Don't be afraid to pursue your interests. Go down to your local access television center. You will be accepted."

Linda Huckins is a Volunteer Producer at Malden (MA) Access Television.



Photo by Kathy Torontola

"Don't be afraid to pursue your interests. Go down to your local access television center. You will be accepted."



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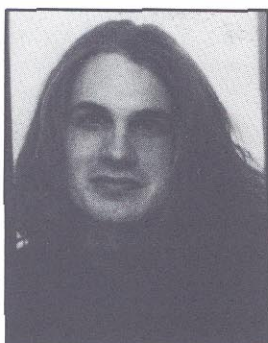
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Opera singer Martin Matthews uses access TV to air his "peeves."

Buffalo, NY

Martin Matthews

Program titles: *Opera Forum; The Loser; Brownsville.*

Martin is a 27-year-old opera singer who has been producing programs at **Buffalo Community Access Media** since 1992. He first became interested in access in order to "air my peeves about life and the society in which we live."

Martin's programs are varied. *Opera Forum* is backstage interviews with short clips of performances at the local opera house. *The Loser* is a comedy-drama about lounge singers, and *Brownsville* is a socio-political satire.

Martin enjoys the fact that "the corporate sector is held at bay from meddling with content" of access programs.

Portage, MI

Jo "Ann" Morgan

Program Title: *Link Up.*

Ann is self-employed and has been an access producer for eight years. She has created 30 programs at **Kalamazoo Community Access**. She became involved with community access because she "wanted to cover those issues not usually available to mass audiences."

Link Up is a talk show series that has covered political races from local mayor to state senator, AIDS issues to planting a garden, horse shows to child sexual abuse.

"We even had **Leonard Peltier**, the Native American activist, as a guest," she says. "Access is the bridge that connects the diversity within our community. Without it there would be a great silence." Ann enjoys the enthusiasm of the creative, dedicated professionals and volunteers she works with. "We are one large family, sharing ideals and talents."



"Access is the bridge that connects the diversity within our community. Without it there would be a great silence," says Ann (front center) pictured here with her Link Up crew.



Fred Mullen (left) with co-host Barrett Lester on the set of Video Shortcuts.

Arlington, MA

Fred Mullen

Program titles: *La Triviata: The Trivia Show* and *Video Shortcuts.*

Fred is a 43-year-old salesperson. He has produced access shows at **Continental Cablevision** for the past eight years. The desire to learn how to operate video equipment is what first brought Fred to community access. But soon, he writes, "I wanted to produce my own shows."

"La Triviata is live with studio audience and viewer call-in," he reports. "Video Shortcuts is an offbeat movie review show where we discuss the movies that are showing on the pay-per-view channels."

"To my mind, community access is television of the people," he says. "It's for your town, about your town, and made by people from your town." Fred's favorite thing about access is "teaming up with other people to create programming!"

Antelope, CA

Dixie Palaroan

Program titles: *A Symphonic Christmas Celebration; Paradise Dancers; Sugihara; Crawdad Festival 1993 & 1994; City Council Candidate Debate; District Attorney Candidates Forum; Second-hand Smoke*; and many others.

Dixie is a employed by the United States Air Force. She has been an access producer for just over a year and has created twelve programs at Access Sacramento.

"Access has helped this to be a better community..."

"I got involved so I could produce programs that would be beneficial to my community and to volunteer my time," she says. "I have produced political programs, Christmas programs, educational programs and entertainment programs." "Access has helped this to be a better community, a community that is informed and shown all types of things," she reports.

Los Angeles, CA

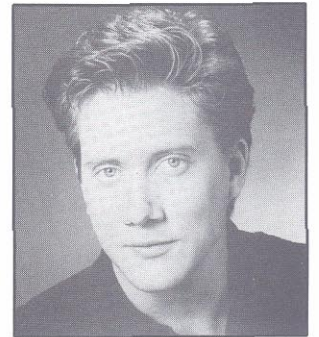
Drew Phillips

Program Title: *Full Circle*.

Drew is a 33-year-old distribution manager. He has been an access producer for four years at Century Cable in West Los Angeles.

"First, I joined a group of producers and directors who were creating programming," he says of his introduction to public access. "Then I continued on my own."

"My program, *Full Circle*, is a short drama about an arrogant stock broker. When he loses his job and everything else, he quickly realizes what it means to belong to a stigmatized social category — the homeless." Drew notes that he really enjoys how easy and accessible access is.



Drew has created a short drama entitled *Full Circle*.

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Tucson, AZ

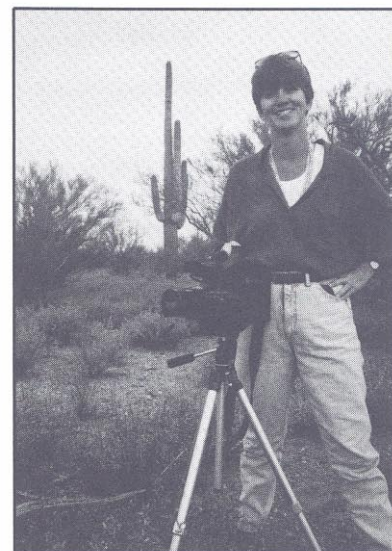
Janell Pierce

Program titles: *Darlene; The Midas Touch; What Tom Did To Darlene; Zen and the Art of the Desert; Women at Work.*

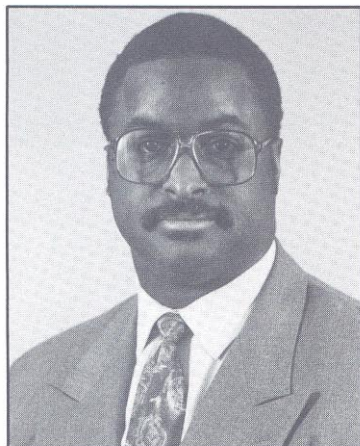
Janell is a 43-year-old librarian. She has been an access producer for over two years, creating programs through the facilities at **Access Tucson**. Janell says she first got involved with community access because "I was interested in helping air voices seldom heard on mainstream television and also interested in learning new skills."

She has produced nature pieces and several documentaries of people including a survivor of incest, a metal sculptor, a folk-artist, and a woman getting a tattoo! Janell says "there is a superb talent pool here in Tucson that deserves an audience. Access broadens the dialogue possible by offering a forum to those with non-traditional perspectives."

She lists the camaraderie and cooperation among crew people, minimal censorship, and opportunities to learn and contribute the things she likes about her access activities.



"...there is a superb talent pool here in Tucson that deserves an audience."



"Access is 'the only way that we as the public have pure freedom of speech.'"

Buffalo, NY

Jimmie L. Pilcher

Program titles: *From Poverty to Riches; Judicial Murder; the Universe of Yahweh.*

Jimmie came to **Buffalo Community Access Media** as the sponsor of programming produced in other cities. "I saw programs that I felt should be aired [in Buffalo]." The programs he sponsors contain religious information about the **Nation of Yahweh**. "I could not afford to pay commercial television to have them televised," he added. Jimmie has also begun training and starting to develop his own programming.

Jimmie notes that community access is "the only way that we as the public have pure freedom of speech." He says he enjoys meeting other producers at the access center and working to make access "the best it can be."

East Brunswick, NJ

Jaqueline Jacobson Pliskin



Program title: *Little Dabblers.*

An author and artist, Jaqueline has produced access programming for the past 11 years at PCTC in Piscataway, NJ. Her program *Little Dabblers* has 62 episodes. "I started as a volunteer for an arts group and it developed into my own program," she says. "*Little Dabblers* is a program that encourages children and adults to free their creativity and explore all forms of art. I demonstrate creative expression for all ages using everyday household items and readily available craft supplies." She notes that access programming has increased her community's awareness of and access to important information.

"Little Dabblers is a program that encourages children and adults to free their creativity and explore all forms of art."

Tampa, FL

Joel Provost

Program titles: *Music Stroll; Top Story; Mind Warp; Gasparilla '45; High School Football.*

Joel is a 32-year-old computer programmer/analyst. He has produced programming at the **Jones Intercable** public access studio for four years. During that time he has created 10 programs.

"I was curious from watching the channel..."

"I was curious from watching the channel," he said, "and I was interested in the computer graphics." Joel usually produces community events, local parades and concerts. He has also done documentaries, including one on the media's abuse of public access in Tampa. Joel's favorite thing about access is "unbound creativity."

Lockport, NY

Nick Pukalo

Program titles: *Christian Tapes for the Disabled; Prison Ministry; Mission to Russia; Kingdom Bound; The Buffalo Guitar Quartet & Jim Piorkowski.*

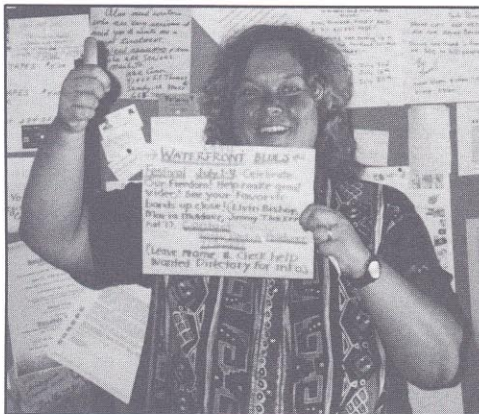
A 44-year-old minister, Nick produces programming at **Lockport Community TV - 20**. He has produced more than 80 programs in the four years that he has been involved in access.

"I saw cable access as a window to the community through which I could witness the love of Christ to a hurting and lost people," he says. "I see a relationship with God as the answer to society's problems."

"...the medium 'is accessible to ordinary people like myself.'"

Nick's programs are all ministry-related. They deal with issues such as marriage problems, homelessness, missionary organization awareness, and often include personal testimonies of what God has done for people.

"Access is an alternative," Nick says. "I believe as my programs have been viewed by the public, their concept of God has been changed and their lives have been changed for the better." Nick says his favorite thing about access is that the medium "is accessible to ordinary people like myself."



Kathy got involved with community access because she had "a creative desire to make good music programs."

Portland, OR

Kathy Rankin

Program titles: *Waterfront Blues Festival; The Bite; 3rd Annual Inner City Blues Festival; Acoustic Blues Festival 1992.*

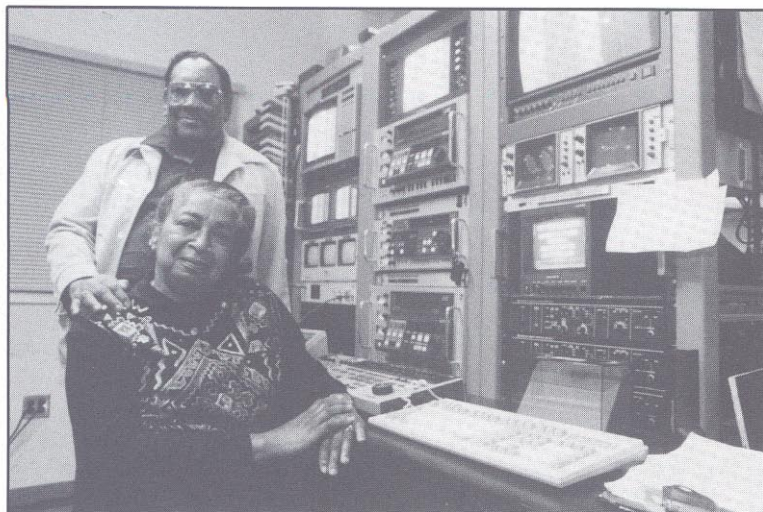
Kathy is a 35-year-old homemaker and mother of one child. She has been an access producer at **Multnomah Community Television** for eight years, creating over 70 programs during that time. She got involved with community access because she had "a creative desire to make good music programs." Her programs have been produced "to bring a great forum for music into the people's homes."

"People who attend the **Blues Festival** understand the need to promote the event because it is a community service that raises funds to feed the hungry," she says. "Many of these events would suffer because they lack media representation."

Kathy says that community access has helped non-profit organizations get their message out to the community and has encouraged volunteerism at many worthwhile events. She listed many things about access that she considers her favorites, including the training to use equipment, creative control, freedom of expression and the ability to document events to share with others.

Springfield Township, Ohio

Howard & Juanita Rawlings



Howard and Juanita Rawlings have been producing programming at Waycross Community Television for the past three years.

Program Titles: *In and Around 452...; Let's Talk Money; The Black Market Place.*

Howard and Juanita Rawlings have been producing programming at Waycross Community Television for the past three years. Howard had been active in access in Inkster, Michigan before moving to Springfield Township, Juanita's hometown, located in the suburbs of Cincinnati.

After finding the local access center and taking training, Howard and Juanita recruited their neighbors and produced their first series *In and Around 452...*

Three years later their programming includes two other series, *Let's Talk Money* and *The Black Market*. All of the Rawlings' programs feature successful African-American professionals in hopes of "motivating young people to realize that nothing is impossible."

A man of many talents, Howard and his jazz band *The Groove Merchants* record original themes for introductions and closings. Howard says he also likes working with other producers on a variety of programming.

Buffalo, NY

Arnie Rein

Program titles: *Waste Not; A River for Tomorrow; Water Fuel Cell; River in Conflict; Jeremy's Travels.*

Arnie creates his programs at the Buffalo Community Access Media facilities. A professional truck driver, he has been using access to present programs on environmental and historical subjects for the past seven years.

"My original programs were environmentally focused," says Arnie, "like the restoration of the Buffalo waterfront and the toxic waste cleanup. In *Water Fuel Cell* we traced the story of a car that runs on water all the way to Columbus, Ohio. In *Jeremy's Travels* a boy searches for historical sites around western New York." He adds that he has also been working on a format for environmental public service announcements.

"Access is truly part of the community" says Arnie. "It's that channel that cousin Charlie or the guy at work is going to be on tonight."

"It's that channel that cousin Charlie or the guy at work is going to be on tonight."

Charlie says one of his favorite things about using community access is working with and sharing ideas with others in the community.

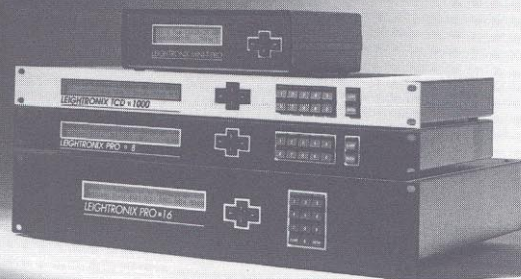
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Somerville, MA

Young Producer Speaks for Teens

by Denise Taylor

“They call us Generation X, but one day we’re going to take over,” said 17-year-old Natalia Velez. “When we grow up, we’re going to be the lawyers, the doctors, and the drug dealers, whatever we choose. Adults should know what we are all about because it’s like a little kid, if you tell it over and over that it’s stupid, one day it is going to believe you, and if adults keep telling us that we’re no good and we’re just going to be drug dealers, we’ll get to the point that we might as well just do it. So I want to start talking because I have something to say.”

Natalia, one of the youngest producers at **Somerville Community Access Television (SCAT)**, does have plenty to say, both to adults and to her peers. She wants adults to know that teenagers urgently need them to set a better example and offer more encouragement. She wants her peers to know that they can refuse part of the older generation’s legacy: racism and violence. Access television has played an important role in helping her reach out. Her first video, *My Friend*, won her a **Best Emerging Producer** award from the **Women in the Director’s Chair Festival**.

Originally, Natalia’s reason for getting involved with access TV was less noble than it is today. “I did it to get out of the house,” she said. Natalia, who immigrated from Columbia to the United States alone at the age of 13, and was living with her very protective aunt. “I never thought about doing video before. I thought it would be really hard – and it is hard. At first though,” she admitted, “I wanted to learn about it because my aunt wouldn’t let me go out.”

Natalia became increasingly enthused with the **Mirror Project** and the freedom it gave her to speak as she pleased. “I made the video [*My Friend*] to show people that young people are not bad,” she said. “People look at the way we dress or talk and they get scared. So I followed my friends from school with a camera ... Basically, I wanted to show people that we are all right.”

Next, Natalia joined **Sabor Latino**, a SCAT video project for Spanish and Portuguese speaking immigrant girls, where she co-produced a weekly show on teen issues such as teen pregnancy and AIDS education. She was then hired by the **Institute of Contemporary Art** to write and produce **Young Black and Malcolm** with four other teenagers.

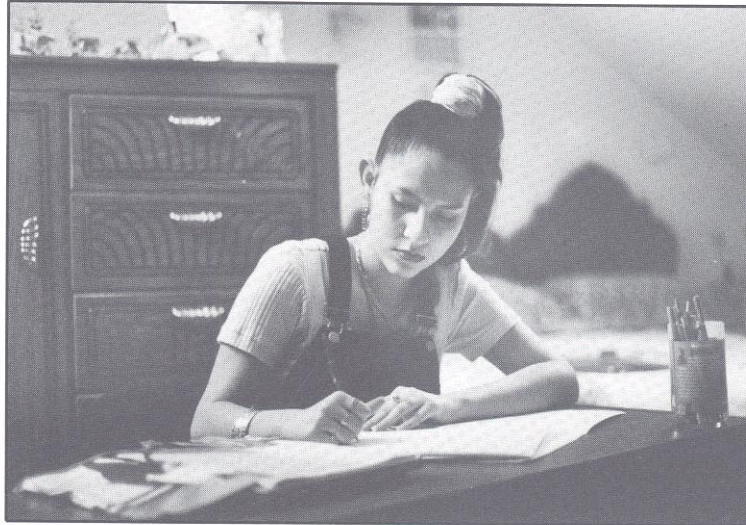


Photo by Denise Taylor.

Natalia works on scripts for her video projects. “I want to start talking because I have something to say.”

“In Columbia there is no discrimination because of color, it’s because of money,” she said, “If you have money you are good, if you don’t you’re bad. But when I came here, people were like, she’s light and she’s got nappy hair, it’s a totally different thing.” While taping interviews for the video, residents of one subsidized housing project refused to let her in because “her skin was too light,” meanwhile she recorded the stories of those oppressed by whites.

Violence is an

equally pressing issue to Natalia. She is one of 24 mediators at her high school who are trained to stop other students from getting physically violent. “I’ve seen a lot of violence when I was little, so I know it is something that doesn’t take you anywhere,” she said. Once you go through the [mediation] training,” she said, “you can’t see somebody fighting and just sit there.” She means what she says. On her way to work one day, she diffused a dangerous conflict to stop one girl from shooting another.

Recently, she collaborated with local photographer and SCAT member **Jane Tyska** on a video showcasing the mediation project. Natalia hopes the video will reach other students, but all of her friends already know she is a mediator. Sometimes her friends get fed up, some of them called her a “respect freak”, others call her “Miss Goody Two Shoes.” For Natalia though, as with her other projects, the most important things is that they are listening. “They say they don’t care about all the stuff I talk about,” she said “but they respect what I say.”

Denise Taylor is a freelance writer as well as a volunteer producer at Somerville (MA) Community Access Television.

“I’ve seen a lot of violence when I was little, so I know it is something that doesn’t take you anywhere...”

West Allis, WI

Sharon Rhode

Program titles: *Viewers Voice; Christmas Fun; Easter Fun.*

Sharon is the president of Viewers Voice, Inc. She has been an access producer for five years and has created 86 programs at West Allis Community Communications.

The *Viewers Voice* show tries to educate viewers on how to keep their favorite programming on the air. *Christmas Fun* and *Easter Fun* entertain children around the holidays.

"I don't think the community of West Allis knows enough about public access to understand the impact it has," she says. "But we're trying to change that!"



Sharon Rhode, left, with Tyne Daly and Sharon Gless.



Milpitas, CA

Gail Jones Sanchez

Program titles: *AIDS Improv; Female Sexuality; Male Sexuality; Kids Fear About Nuclear War; Say NO to Drugs;* and several PSAs.

A 51-year-old licensed clinical social worker, Gail has been an access producer for 10 years. Creating her programs at TCI Cablevision - Fremont, she uses access as a way to give psychological information to the community. She has produced programs on psychology, sex therapy, political issues and AIDS.

"Access gives good, non-violent information to the community and provides all people who want to be involved with an opportunity," she says.

"Access gives good, non-violent information to the community and provides all people who want to be involved with an opportunity."

Brooklyn Park, MN

Tony Sgarlatti

Program titles: *The Truth (as I see it); About Your Health; Body Owners Workshop; The Dallas Conspiracy; What the Government Isn't Telling You About AIDS; Improving Health Through Homeopathy; Stress Release;* and more.

Tony is a 41-year-old manager. He has been producing access programs for four years at Northwest Community Television. He first got involved with community access because he wanted a creative outlet that could

make a difference in other people's lives.

His programs cover all kinds of topics, from interior decorating to UFO's to music recitals. "One of my weekly shows, *The Truth (as I see it)*, is a talk show that brings on guests that do not always get air time through the mainstream media," he says.

Tony's favorite thing about access?
"It's FREE!"

"Tony's favorite thing about access? 'It's FREE!'"

Buffalo, NY

Raheem A. Shabaka

Program titles: *African Focus; Community Focus; Open Challenge.*

"I wanted to prepare myself for video work in South Africa..."

Raheem is a professional videographer who has been producing access programming for two years at **Buffalo Community Access Media.**

"I first got involved with community access because I wanted to prepare myself for video work in South Africa," says Raheem. One of his programs *African Focus*

covers issues related to African peoples on the African continent. He also produces a program about local issues called *Community Focus*, which covers topics like health services, elder care, and crime control in the Buffalo area.

"No censorship and the availability of production facilities" are Raheem's favorite aspects of access.

Somerville, MA

Lucia Small

Program titles: *Abortion Rights '92; Paper Tiger Television; The Greg Greenway Show; The Story; I Want to Ride My Bicycle; Bosnia Now; Give Me Some Truth; 100% Coverage; Plutonium is Forever.*

Lucia is a 31-year-old freelance producer. For the past four years she has been producing programming at **Somerville Community Access Television.**

"I wanted to participate in alternative media..."

She says she first got involved with community access because "I was interested in the concept of giving voice — a media voice — to the people. I wanted to participate in alternative media."

All of the programs she has produced at SCAT have been for the series *Dead Air Live*. The series is produced by the **Somerville**

Producers Group, which just celebrated its 20th anniversary on access — "the longest running cable program (that we know of) in the nation."

"Access has opened up my community's provincial, closed side. With many immigrants and the diversification of our population, Somerville needs a method to examine itself," she says.

"Access is an artistic, political community."

If Access is your privilege, then this is your responsibility...

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Greenhills, OH

Gwen Spencer & the Winton Woods Middle School Video Club



Gwen Spencer and the 1994-95 Winton Woods Middle School Video Club during a break in their hectic shooting schedule.

Program Titles: *WWMS News Network*; school sports and music events.

Gwen Spencer has been a Board member for Waycross Community Television and adviser of the Winton Woods Middle School Video Club since 1985. As a Waycross Programming Board member, she recognized how community access television could provide resources for her school's seventh and eighth graders.

After ten years, Gwen says she is still surprised by the creative television her students produce. Their programming efforts include sporting and music events crewed and directed by WWMS Video Club members.

WWMS English teachers have also found the video club is a great way for students to gain experience writing and reading. The Video Club has taped several short news shows with the English students as the writers and talent.

The *WWMS News Network* airs in the school's internal system and on Waycross Community Television in the community. Gwen says "Students and parents love to see each show, and the kids learn on both sides of the camera."



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Torrance, CA John Spencer

Program titles: *Los Cancioneros sing "Cole Porter"; Playne Jayne "Situations Unknown"; Awesome Kids; Investigative Stories; Christmas Crime on Oak Street; Three Time Blues.*

John is a 51-year-old business owner, who has been creating access programming at **Torrance Community Television** for the past five years.

"My goal was and still is to learn as much as I possibly can about production and telecommunications," he writes about his

involvement with access. "Our facility gives me that opportunity."

"Without access, the individual would no longer have a voice," he continues. "All of the wonderfully colorful and creative alternative programming would disappear."

"The sheer number of citizens who have become producers is a testimony to the interest in our community..."

"The sheer number of citizens who have become producers is a testimony to the interest in our community," he says. His

favorite thing about access is "the

wonderfully creative chaos from which springs a slightly more than off-center look at our city and its people."

Olympia, WA Eli Sterling

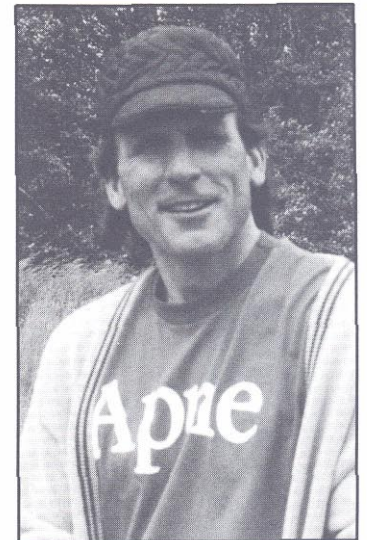
Program title: *Earthbound - an environmental public affairs series.*

Eli is a 39-year-old environmental educator. He has been a community producer at **Thurston Community Television** for five years, producing over 50 episodes of his *Earthbound* series. *Earthbound* was created to enhance community awareness, understanding and respect for a broad range of environmental concerns, from water and air quality to tribal rights and government regulation. "There is no other medium where I could freely, creatively, passionately, and effectively work to bring cultural concepts to the forefront of public policy discussion," Eli remarked.

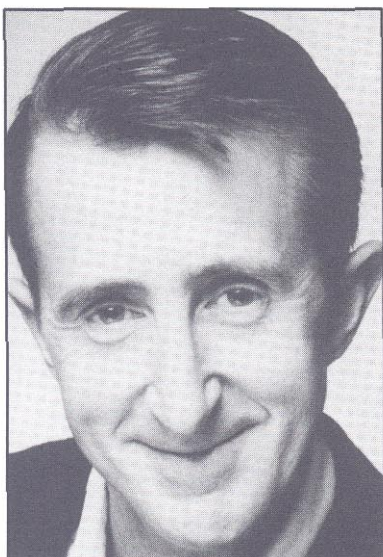
"I often question whether or not I am becoming more hopeful for our natural environment," he wrote. "What is wonderful about the *Earthbound* programs is that the guests have no question at all. They know they can make a difference. Such commitment only deepens my resolve to respect, honor, and give voice to their work."

"Access literally introduces the community to itself," Eli says. "Olympia, a capital city, has no other television station in town. [Without access] our community would definitely know what we would be missing...a greater sense of our selves."

Eli's favorite thing about access... "the blind and blissful panic!"



"There is no other medium where I could freely, creatively, passionately, and effectively work..."



Staten Island, NY Richard Thomas

Program titles: *Off the Wall and Over the Top; The Year 2525; AIDS and Adolescents in America; Discoveries in Ancient Egypt.*

Richard is a 44-year-old waiter. He has been an access producer for three years and has created 55 programs at **Staten Island Community Television**.

"I was invited to help on someone else's show," he says of his introduction to access.

Off the Wall became a series and covered humor and the non-linear emotional territory...one man's quest into the "human condition." Richard says he appreciates the opportunity access gives him to explore his creative potential in a safe environment.

Off the Wall became a series and covered humor and the non-linear emotional territory...one man's quest into the "human condition."

Cincinnati, OH

My Favorite Access Producer

by Joyce Miller

Most of our access rules and procedures are named after a producer.

The "No Fake Blood on the Cyc Curtain" rule for the guy who got overly enthusiastic in his movie review show. The "Dismemberment of Equipment May Cause you to Lose a Precious Body Part Rule" for the citizen who decided to take a circuit technology repair into her own hands.

My favorite producer is **Eldred Bishop**, for which many of our original policies were named. Eldred was always pushing the envelope, both creatively and forthrightly.

He started producing public access programs in 1982, about three hours after the franchise was granted to **Warner Cable** for the **City of Cincinnati**. **Second Community Baptist Hour** was carried as a weekly program on one of our access channels for close to eleven years.

Eldred branched off into other venues, creating original dramas featuring strong social messages. One in particular warned of the detrimental affects of cocaine. Eldred attempted to make the point that drug use wasn't limited to the black inner city.

Eldred entered his "contest phase" around 1984. As a worker at what was then the Fernald uranium processing plant, he had taped a baseball game featuring teams from the plant. It turned out that the baseball chatter was a little too harsh for Eldred's taste so he dubbed the fifteen voice-strong **Second Community Baptist Choir** over the expletives. The effect was interesting.

By 1992, he had purchased his own film camera and had begun work on **One Way Out**. This ambitious feature-length film showcased Eldred's talents as a director. Two mortgages later, with lots of disbelievers left on the sidelines, Eldred nearly had it done. But, he was having

trouble getting the sound track together. I went out to his house with another access staff member who had extensive background in film production.

We were able to help Eldred dub his sound track.

He worked night and day to meet his deadline; a premier during the summer Jazz Festival week at **The Movies**, a downtown cinema.

Now he has video distribution rights for the film and he is looking to do his next project. Eldred is still working at Fernald. "But not for long," I tell him.

Recently Eldred called me. I should note that Eldred always calls me. I should also note the likewise, I always call him. I seem to need to hear his voice.

"What's wrong?" he asked when I picked up the phone. I had to work on Martin Luther King Day. The holiday hadn't stopped Eldred from trying to reach me. "Eldred, I'm not here. We're closed." I was feeling sorry for myself.

"Uh huh. I saw the news. Those women who took their shirts off on public access. Was it really a live show?"

"Uh huh, Eldred. It was live. I have to go before City Council tomorrow. I'm working on my presentation."

"You don't sound so good. You know, you started this thing."

I didn't answer.

"You have to believe in yourself," he said. I listened. Eldred

boosted me up for the next five minutes extolling the virtues of public access... reminding me of why it was so important.

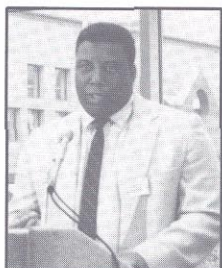
Why I had to give City Hall a piece of my mind. "Take the high road," he said.

It's humbling to see what simply offering a chance, an opening, can do for people. It has nothing to do with what public access has done for Eldred, and everything to do with what Eldred has done for us.

The former viewpoint

would be far too patronizing. The importance of access, Eldred has shown me, is who walks through the door.

Joyce Miller is Executive Director of **Cincinnati Community Video**, a non-profit organization operating public and educational access in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Eldred Bishop addresses a recent conference in Cincinnati.

"Those women who took their shirts off on public access. Was it really a live show?"

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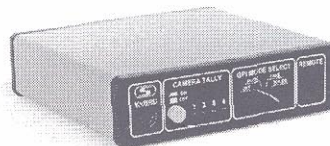
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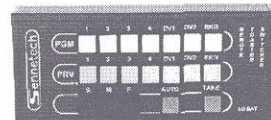
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Springfield, VA

Jai Tomlinson

Program titles: *Politically Correct Cooking*; *Peace Park: The Story of Initiative 36*; *War Toys and the Gulf War*; *US War Crimes in the Persian Gulf*.

Jai is a 32-year-old word processor. She has produced more than 40 programs at **Fairfax Cable Access** over the course of the last four years.

"I spent weeks watching the Gulf War media coverage and was amazed at the lack of anti-war programming," she says. "I was depressed about it until a friend told me about public access and I started producing."

"My programs have ranged in topic from gun control to AIDS activism, human rights for indigenous people to chemicals in food, peace walks, and DC statehood."

"Opening the door to mass media has allowed programming that will not be done by a major network."

Jai says her favorite thing about access is "being able to use the facilities at Fairfax Cable Access Corporation...at no charge!"

"This is an incredible benefit!"



*Jai Tomlinson (front row, fifth from left), with the crew and guests of her popular access show **Politically Correct Cooking**.*



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Definitions from cyberspace...

Continued from page 6...

listserv or **newsgroup** to be read by others who subscribe to the same group.

FAQ: Acronym for "frequently asked questions" that refers to information posted about the topic of discussion in a **newsgroup** or other **Internet** group.

Flame: An insulting and abusive personal attack posted to a **BBS** or sent as personal **E-mail**.

Hacker: Can mean either a person very skilled in the ways of **cyberspace** and computer programming, or someone who uses those skills in mischievous and possible illegal ways.

Gopher: A method of accessing information on the **Internet** that is text-based and menu driven. Users make their way to **Gopher sites**, or repositories of data.

Hypertext: Highlighted text on the computer screen that, by clicking on it, allows a user to move to files containing related information.

Internet: Just what is it? No one knows. But, as near as any one can tell, it's a huge worldwide network of computers that regular people can use to give and receive information, access databases, exchange **E-mail**, chat, or just generally goof around. Probably it's the "information superhighway," but I'm not sure. It's not just for nerds anymore!

IRC: An acronym for "**Internet** relay chat," a way to carry on electronic conversations in real time over the **Internet**.

Listserv: A group of people who elect to receive all **E-mail** addressed to their particular group.

Modem: An electronic device that allows a computer to send and receive information over a phone line.

Mosaic/Netscape: Computer software that enables a user to more easily access information on the **Internet's World Wide Web**.

Newsgroups: Like **BBS**'s that are topically arranged — a group of people that share a common interest and so exchange information electronically. Messages can be sent simultaneously to every member of the group.

Node: A place on the **Internet** where information is stored or relayed.

PPP: Acronym for "**point to point protocol**." One system that enables a computer to send and receive data over the phone lines.

SLIP: Acronym for "**serial line Internet protocol**." Another system that enables a computer to send and receive data over the phone lines.

Spam: Messages that are less than scintillating posted to a **BBS**, **newsgroup**, or received as personal **E-mail**.

Sysop: Abbreviation for "**system operator**," the person that oversees the operation of a **BBS**, **listserv**, or other multi-user computer system.

Telnet: A method for remotely accessing other computers on the

Internet.

World Wide Web: Frequently referred to as "**www**" or "**the web**," it's a portion of the **Internet** where the information is presented with graphics as well as text. **The web** makes extensive use of

hypertext that allows users to move around to different **websites** easily by pointing and clicking.

Keep studying these vocabulary words and soon you'll be saying "I flamed the hacker on the IRC that spammed me in the newsgroup,

then the sysop surfed the web with Mosaic and clicked on related hypertext" with confidence!

Next time...**Netiquette!**

Paul LeValley is Executive Director of Arlington (Virginia) Community Television.

Public Policy

Continued from page 5...

examples of proposed state legislation which provides public space, and a how-to guide for this more administrative, less political process. This information, along with help on video dial tone applications, will be ready for the **1995 National Conference** in Boston.

Keep up the good work!

The Alliance needs to maintain the momentum and energy of recent campaigns, which have resulted in an unprecedented level of visibility. While the challenge to provide public space may seem overwhelming at times, it is important to step back for perspective. People are important, communication is a basic human right, and the cause of the Alliance, its members and constituents is noble. Hopefully we can work together and enjoy this part of our job to let everybody, including and especially our federal, state and local elected officials, know this simple, accurate and positive information.

Alan Bushong is the Chair of the Alliance's Public Policy Committee.

Alliance News/Congress

Continued from page 8...

communications Subcommittee Chairman Jack Fields (R-TX). The House and Senate telecommunications reform bills will then go to a conference committee which will work out the differences in legislation.

The services of government relations coordinator Jeff Hops and all expenses involved with the Alliance public policy efforts are made possible by the financial support of the members of the **Alliance Public Policy Council** and **Public Policy Network**.

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TRADE SHOW**

JULY 5 - 8, 1995

**WESTIN HOTEL
AT COPLEY PLACE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

THIS CONFERENCE IS DESIGNED FOR:

- ◆ City Managers and Telecommunications Staff
- ◆ Cable and Telecommunications Regulators
- ◆ Community Video Producers and Volunteers
- ◆ Public, Educational and Government Access Staff
- ◆ Community Computing Center Staff
- ◆ Media and Communications Educators
- ◆ Media Arts Center Staff and Boards
- ◆ Cable Operators and Community Television Staff
- ◆ Community Media Center Board Members
- ◆ Media Literacy Advocates
- ◆ Telecommunications Policy Makers
- ◆ Providers of Media Services and Equipment
- ◆ International Producers and Distributors
- ◆ Community Media Visionaries

Alliance Information Infrastructure

Continued from page 6...

subscription information to the AII Committee (c/o kapeters@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us). We will provide this information both online and in future issues of CMR.

In the near future.

Look for information on how to add your name to dozens of Alliance mailing lists on topics which may include organizational structure (information services, organizational development or conference planning, for example); operational issues (training, fundraising, franchise renewal, government access or equipment purchases, for example); or general areas (public policy, grassroots, international). There may also be lists dedicated to specific regional discussions (Northwest, Southeast or Mid-Atlantic, for example) or lists just for sounding off (electronic soapbox or new ideas).

Also look for the development of the Alliance for Community Media's own

"home page." This service will allow people to access an unlimited array of information about the Alliance through the World Wide Web. Information and archival data which may be found here might include bylaws, board minutes, latest public policy information and contact information for all congressional representatives, back issues of *CMR*, member rosters, national and regional contacts, similar organizations, samples of franchise agreements, newsletters from member organizations/centers, consultants, conference information and so, so much more.

The utilization of these services will greatly enhance the ability of the national office and board to provide immediate updates on legislation or conferences. It will also give members anywhere in the country the ability to connect with others and easily ask questions and seek information on limitless subjects. The opportuni-

ties are literally endless.

Who's on the committee?

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If you would like to stay informed on committee business, please send e-mail to Kari Peterson at kapeters@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us
Kari Peterson is Executive Director of Davis (CA) Community Television, and serves as Chair of the Alliance for Community Media's Information Infrastructure Committee.

Getting There...

Continued from page 6...

which your computer and the host server communicate. To have access to the fastest growing part of Internet called the **World Wide Web (WWW)**, you must have a SLIP or PPP account to accommodate the amount of information necessary for full graphical interface (pictures). The WWW turns the Internet into a point and click playground and you should strive to get con-

nected at this level. Special software is necessary for WWW but it is provided free of charge to NPOs, so your IP should pass it along to you.

The fourth level of Internet connection is a full line attached directly to the Internet. These range in price based on local access and capacity. You would have to get serious about popping at least a thousand dollars per month for this access. Some communities form buying co-ops and civic networks to buy a "fat" Internet line, like a T-1 (1,544 mega bits per second transmission rate). With this access you have a faster connection and after you pay the base amount, you don't have any additional line fees.

Some alternative Internet access routes consist of tying in with your cable's institutional network to reach an IP or getting an ISDN phone connection from the phone company and then using that to reach an Internet provider. We will dig into this whole topic in more depth in a future article.

Dirk Koning is Chair of the Alliance Editorial Committee.

"The fourth level of Internet connection is a full line attached directly to the Internet."

CONNECTIONS

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Fulfilling the Public Interest: Managing Cable Public

Access for Success by **Mary Benin Cardona** distills the collective wisdom of over 40 access managers, cable regulators, producers and viewers to answer the question *what makes access television successful?*

The thesis is organized into three sections. The first covers the struggle for access to telecommunication in the United States and how public

access fits into that struggle. Part two concentrates on survey findings and outlines the factors for success. And part three illustrates the success factors with several case studies.

Intended to assist access managers, boards, and commissions in examining their structure, setting priorities, and evaluating their progress, the report is available from Mary Benin Cardona at 608-278-1855 — or by e-mail at jcardona@students.wisc.edu.

1994 - 95 Alliance Board of Directors

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On the cover: Volunteer community television producer Pearson Brown is surrounded by some of her fellow access TV stars...!

An Invitation to Join the
Alliance for Community Media

PUBLIC POLICY COUNCIL and PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK

Now more than ever, we must push our concerns with the U.S. Congress, Administration, National Commissions, and the Courts. Over the past few months, the Alliance has proven what a concerted government relations program can accomplish for all PEG access. Please make sure these efforts can continue.

Become a member of the **Alliance Public Policy Council for \$2,500 per year**. You'll receive detailed reports on current legislative and litigative efforts of the Alliance, monthly telephone conference calls with the Executive Director, as well as the benefits below.

Become a member of the **Alliance Public Policy Network for \$500 per year**. You'll receive Public Policy Updates every week, either by fax broadcast or e-mail.

All donors of \$100 or more will receive the new red and silver Alliance lapel pin.

Public Policy Council Members:

Access Tucson (AZ); Boston Neighborhood Network (MA); Central States Region of the Alliance for Community Media; Manhattan Neighborhood Network (New

York, NY); North Suburban Access Corporation (Roseville, MN); and Northwest Community TV/NWCTC-NWCAC (Brooklyn Park, MN).

Public Policy Network Members:

ACTV-21/Columbus Community Cable Access (OH); Amherst Community Television (MA); Cambridge Community Television (MA); Cape Cod Community TV (S. Yarmouth, MA); Chicago Access Corporation (IL); Citizen Television (New Haven, CT); City of St. Paul (MN); Community Access Center (Kalamazoo, MI); Jones Intercable (Tampa, FL); Carl Kucharski (Somerville, MA); Malden Access Television (MA); Milwaukee Access Telecommunications Authority (WI); Little City Foundation (Palatine, IL); Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (MA); Newton Cable Access Corporation (MA); Northeast Region of the Alliance for Community Media; Pegasys, Inc. (Enid, OK); Salem Access Television Corporation (MA); Saratoga Community Access/City of Saratoga (CA); Somerville Community Access Television (MA); Southeast Region of the Alliance for Community Media; Southwest Oakland Cable Commission (Farmington Hills, MI); Thurston Community Television (Olympia, WA).

For information on how you can become a member, call the *Alliance for Community Media* at (202)393-2650, send a fax to (202)393-2653, or write to 666 11th Street, NW, Washington, DC. 20001-4542.



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